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RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1867
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000585

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI REACTS TO AFRICAN UNION RESOLUTION

REF: A. HARARE 583
[1](#)B. HARARE 582

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4(d).

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: On July 2, opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai gave the official party reaction to the African Union's (AU) Resolution on Zimbabwe. He opened by asserting that violence throughout the country continues. Tsvangirai stated that the AU statement following last weekend's summit did not adequately condemn the ongoing political violence in Zimbabwe or refute the legitimacy of a Mugabe presidency, despite recent statements by the Pan-African Parliament, Southern African Development Community (SADC), and AU election observer missions acknowledging the violence and lack of credibility of the June 27 presidential run-off. Tsvangirai dismissed AU support for a government of national unity (GNU) and denied any ongoing talks with the Mugabe regime, but stated that he would welcome renewed negotiations with ZANU-PF in order to establish a transitional government based on the March 29 election (in which the MDC won the majority of the vote). However, Tsvangirai stated that MDC participation was contingent on a set time-frame of talks and the presence of a mediator from the African Union. END SUMMARY.

Regime violence continues

[1](#)2. (U) Citing the deaths of nine MDC supporters and new reports of beatings and displacement of "hundreds" since the June 27 contest, Tsvangirai claimed that politically-motivated violence in Zimbabwe was not abating. According to the MDC, 500 people in Manicaland Province were displaced over the weekend and sought shelter at MDC offices in Mutare. In Masvingo Province, an MDC violence report noted an increase in politically-motivated rape at ZANU-PF torture camps since Friday. In Mashonaland Central, the MDC reported that about 2,000 families were living in the

mountains after fleeing violence in the province. In Mashonaland East, the MDC stated that all opposition party councillors remained in hiding. Nationwide, the MDC reported that "thousands" of its supporters were still missing and that "a general atmosphere of fear and violence continues to pervade the entire country." Tsvangirai called on ZANU-PF to immediately stop the violence, disband militia bases and torture camps, and halt the "partisan operations" of security services.

Condemns GNU, welcomes "transitional government"

¶3. (U) Tsvangirai chastised the AU resolution for not overtly condemning the credibility of the June 27 election results or for acknowledging that "most" African leaders refused to recognize Mugabe as head of state. Tsvangirai stated that a government of national unity (GNU) would not address the problems in Zimbabwe or reflect the will of the people, as demonstrated in the March 29 national elections. As such, Tsvangirai stated that the MDC was not interested in a GNU, but would welcome a negotiated "transitional government or agreement" intended to establish a "people-driven" period of transition ("the time frame is up to the people; as long as it takes"). Tsvangirai stated that the goals of the transition period should be for a new constitution to be drafted and for the demilitarization ("de-ZANLAFication," according to Tsvangirai, in a reference to Mugabe's military during the civil war) of democratic

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institutions to occur.

Unhappy with Mbeki, an appeal for AU mediators

¶4. (C) However, Tsvangirai declared that the MDC would only participate in talks with ZANU-PF if the mediation team was expanded beyond the SADC-mandated leadership of South African President Thabo Mbeki to include at least one permanent representative from the African Union and the establishment of a clear time frame (Tsvangirai suggested two weeks). Tsvangirai expressed his disappointment at "years" of unsuccessful talks under Mbeki, and stated that the MDC would no longer "dialogue for the sake of dialogue" alone. (NOTE: In talks today with MDC negotiators Tendai Biti, Elton Mangoma, and Welshman Ncube (refs), none seemed insistent on the addition of an AU mediator as a sine qua non for talks. END NOTE.)

The succession question

¶5. (U) Noting that "our struggle is not about power, but democracy," Tsvangirai referenced the utility of negotiated settlements in Angola, Mozambique and other African nations. He repeatedly stated that questions about what his role would be in a new government were "details" to be worked out in negotiations. When asked to comment on media reports that the European Union would only recognize a Tsvangirai-led government in Zimbabwe, Tsvangirai replied, "I say: Thank you very much. But that is not necessarily the reality that we face."

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Clearly disappointed in the African Union's resolution, Tsvangirai nonetheless looked to the AU to play an active role in future talks between the MDC and ZANU-PF. Tsvangirai's rhetoric suggested his openness to a negotiated settlement and flexibility regarding his position within a

new government. However, whether the AU will be willing to step into discussions that are considered the purview of President Mbeki, ZANU-PF's willingness to seriously consider relinquishing even some of its power and the wisdom of allowing Mugabe regime elements to participate in a new government remain unknown.

17. (C) As noted Reftel, we are still uncertain as to the level of violence and whether it is subsiding. Raising the issue of violence, as Tsvangirai did, serves to keep Zimbabwe in the international spotlight, but more assessment and analysis on this issue is warranted. END COMMENT.

McGee